

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1 1. A network communication method, comprising:
 - 2 identifying, for a communication session, an originator and a participant;
 - 3 establishing a reciprocity rule for said communication session; and
 - 4 conducting said communication session involving said originator and said
 - 5 participant based on said reciprocity rule.

- 1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein said identifying further comprises
 - 2 identifying a plurality of participants and wherein said conducting further
 - 3 comprises involving said plurality of participants.

- 1 3. The method of claim 2, further comprising establishing a plurality of
 - 2 reciprocity rules.

- 1 4. The method of claim 1, wherein said identifying further comprises:
 - 2 selecting said participant from an address book.

- 1 5. The method of claim 1, wherein said reciprocity rule is a rule preventing
 - 2 said participant from sending a response message to said originator.

- 1 6. The method of claim 1, wherein said reciprocity rule is a rule permitting
 - 2 said participant to send a response message to said originator.

- 1 7. The method of claim 1, wherein said communication session is an Internet
 - 2 instant messenger session.

- 1 8. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - 2 modifying said reciprocity rule during said communication session.

1 9. A communication device operated by an originator of a communication
2 session, comprising:
3 a processor; and
4 a storage device coupled to said processor and storing instructions adapted
5 to be executed by said processor to:
6 identify, for said communication session, at least a first participant;
7 establish a reciprocity rule for said communication session; and
8 conduct said communication session involving said originator and
9 said participant based on said reciprocity rule.

1 10. The communication device of claim 9, further comprising instructions
2 adapted to be executed by said processor to:
3 modify said reciprocity rule during said communication session.

1 11. The communication device of claim 9, wherein said reciprocity rule is a
2 rule preventing said at least first participant from replying to a message from said
3 originator.

1 12. The communication device of claim 9, wherein said reciprocity rule is a
2 rule allowing said at least first participant to reply to a message from said
3 originator.

1 13. The communication device of claim 9, further comprising:
2 a communication port coupled to said processor and adapted to
3 communicate with at least one of: a messaging server, and a participant device.

1 14. The communication device of claim 9, wherein said storage device further
2 stores an address book containing a plurality of participant addresses.

1 15. A messaging system, comprising:
2 an originator device having a processor and a storage device, said storage
3 device storing instructions adapted to

4 identify at least a first participant in a communication session;
5 establish a reciprocity rule for said at least first participant for said
6 communication session;
7 send at least a first message to said at least first participant in said
8 communication session; and
9 a participant device having a processor and a storage device, said storage
10 device storing instructions adapted to
11 receive said at least first message; and
12 process a response to said at least first message based on said
13 reciprocity rule.

1 16. The messaging system of claim 15, wherein said storage device of said
2 originator device further stores instructions adapted to modify said reciprocity rule
3 during said communication session.

1 17. The messaging system of claim 15, wherein said reciprocity rule prevents a
2 response from said at least first participant.

1 18. The messaging system of claim 15, wherein said reciprocity rule allows a
2 response from said at least first participant.

1 19. A computer-readable medium that stores data accessible by a program
2 executable on a data processing system to perform a communication method, the
3 method comprising:
4 identifying, for a first communication session, an originator and a
5 participant;
6 establishing a reciprocity rule for said communication session; and
7 conducting said communication session involving said originator and said
8 participant based on said reciprocity rule.

1 20. A computer-implemented method, comprising:

2 receiving, from an originator, information identifying a plurality of
3 participants in a communication session;
4 receiving, from said originator, reciprocity rule information for each of said
5 plurality of participants;
6 forwarding a message from said originator to each of said plurality of
7 participants; and
8 processing responses from each of said plurality of participants based on
9 said reciprocity rule information.

1 21. A network communication method, comprising;
2 identifying an originator and at least a first participant;
3 establishing reciprocity rules between said originator and said at least first
4 participant; and
5 conducting a network communication between said originator and said at
6 least first participant pursuant to said reciprocity rules.

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